

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 33, Number 1

The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

March, 1998

We have a date

MARCH

■ **All month.** The windows at Evergreen Federal contain a Kerbyville display (See page 8.) and posters and artifacts relating to the opening of the Sunny Valley Applegate Trail Interpretive Center.

APRIL

■ **April 1.** The annual style show of fashions past is at the fairgrounds pavilion this year. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 7. There's a no-host bar. The \$10 donation includes refreshments, door prizes and entertainment. All proceeds benefit the society. Tickets are available at the Kerbyville Museum, Elegance, Plaza Sew & Vac, Savannah Faire, Pauline's and at the society.

MAY

■ **May 2 to June 14.** A Smithsonian Institution Traveling exhibit: "Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945" will be on display. See page 3.

■ **May 16.** "Rosie the Riveter" a 90-minute film and discussion program by Joanne Mulcahy of Lewis & Clark College. Free.

■ **May 23.** "I'll Tie Back My Hair, Men's Clothing I'll Put On: Warrior Women in Folksongs and History" a program by Dianne Dugaw, U of O. Free.

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.



Ken Roberts and Marilyn Luttrell shared cutting duty as the library was opened.

150 attend as society's research library is officially open to public

By Edith Decker

As a huge project for the society is complete, all those who donated time, money, stuff or just plain good wishes were rewarded as the research library officially opened Feb. 20 with a ribbon cutting and open house.

About 150 people attended the event which began with refreshments at the Schmidt House, and a chance to look through house and enjoy the medical exhibit now in one of the rooms vacated when offices were moved into the new library.

Guests signed in on a board of photos showing the house being moved from I street to its new location — and some of the work thereafter to get the 1925 house up to snuff and reorganized for the purposes of the society.

Opening ceremonies began with the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors greeting everyone, led by their executive director, Dwight Ellis.

The red ribbon was cut by Ken Roberts, who donated the building and paid for its move, and Marilyn Luttrell, the project's main mover and shaker from the society.

Once the ribbon fell, everyone got a

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Open!

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look at the completed library.

Marilyn talked about the progress of the library and introduced our director, Rose Scott, and then Ken and Christine Roberts.

Roberts spoke about how happy he was to have done this for the society and was reminded of his father's advice to give back to the community when he could.

Roberts introduced Guy Finley, the author whose words are on the plaque that dedicates the building: "Though true that all things pass, what is Good stands forever the test of time."

Joan Momsen, our new president, discussed how important the society is to the preservation of history.

County Commissioner Fred Borngasser spoke briefly, mentioning the society actors and how the methods we've employed to bring history alive for those in the county are both entertaining and educational.

Finally, City Manager Bill Peterson presented the official "certificate of occupancy" to Luttrell.

"We do thank the community for their support to make this project happen. The library turned out even better than my dream," Luttrell said.

Several members of the audience, including Nancy Campbell, who cares for our grounds, described their pride in being part of the project because the community was so generous and involved. Campbell offered as an example, Forest Farm owner Ray Prag, who asked what plants she'd like to use for the landscape and then donated them all.

A new plaque of recognition is mounted in the bookshop listing all those who contributed to the project: "There were so many donors that it's TWO plaques," Scott noted.

Not only did the Daily Courier cover the event but also TV newscasts from channels 5 and 10 visited for a tour.

"We're resting now for a long while but in the future we're hoping that the upstairs will be converted into museum quality storage space for the collections," Scott said.

That will be "Phase II" of the library.

If you were unable to attend the open house, Scott, Momsen and Luttrell urge you to stop by to check out the new place. The office hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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W.A. (AL) TILLERY

Letters to the editor

Dear JCHS:

Thanks for the great book, "The Golden Beginnings," Fantastic information!

The "unknown" date for the O'Brien P.O. I believe to be Aug. 8, 1928. At least that's according to "Oregon Post Offices" by Richard Helbock.

Thanks again for this wonderful publication, I did not believe you could surpass the great calendars.

Kenn Lantz
Clackamas, Ore.

Rose Scott:

Thanks for your participation in the Three Rivers Community Hospital Auxiliary home tour.

You ladies were great. We sold around 400 tickets.

Thanks again for being part of this fund-raiser.

Diana Cann, president elect of TRCH Auxiliary

Dear JCHS:

Everyone who entertained at the Knife and Fork Club from the society did a great job last night. The show was enjoyed by all and many learned a lot. Thanks again.

Fred Borngasser, county commissioner

THE OLDTIMER

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512 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(541) 479-7827

Annual dues are \$15 and include a subscription.

Edith Decker — editor

Lee Ann Tardieu — publishing committee chairman

The quarterly circulation of The Oldtimer is 550.
The publishing committee also produces an annual historical publication, mailed free of charge to all members of the society.

Edward Jones

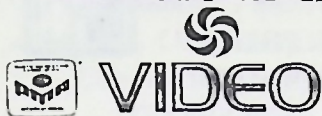
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Smithsonian offers society World War II poster exhibit

The exhibit "Barn Again" last year was such a success, that SITES, the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service, will once again visit.

However, this time the society will be picking up the tab for the cost of the exhibit (\$500) and the expense of shipping it back to Washington, D.C. (\$500). We are looking for community sponsors to help offset the costs.

The exhibit will open at the society on May 2. In connection with this, three World War II related Oregon Chautauqua Programs are planned each Saturday at 2 p.m. at the society during the exhibit's stay — which lasts until June

14. Other events are being planned as well.

"Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945" is the title of the exhibit, which reminds us that "defending freedom is everyone's job" and that the non-soldiers and sailors in the rural communities were expected to be a large part of the war effort.

Americans received a daily dose of propaganda through the bold posters hung in lunchrooms, offices, grocery store windows and even on billboards. This exhibit features 26 of these posters from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

New slate of officers and board members approved

Although eating snacks may be the most enticing part of the annual meeting, the real reason for it is to hand out awards and say hello to the new officers and board members for the coming year.

At the Nov. 16 meeting, held at the Schmidt House barn this year, retiring president Roger Ramsey listed the accomplishments of the year after receiving a plaque of appreciation from the incoming president, Joan Momsen.

The other officers are: Mel Shaw as president-elect; Barbara Smith as treasurer; Jean Boling as secretary.

The board of directors will include: Judy Boling, Tom Bristol, Dorothy Francis, Arden McConnell, John Ahlstrom, Bernie Martin Beck, Dawne Fox, Sherm Heater, Percy Wetherbee, Grace Register, Bob Lane, Jim Clark and Edith Decker.

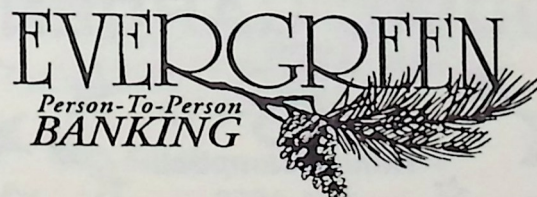
They join the chairmen of the various boards: Nancy Campbell in charge of properties; Janet Lane in charge of the research library; Mike Oaks in charge of historic sites; Lee Ann Tardieu in charge of publishing; Charlie Mitchell in charge of publicity; Mollie Means in charge of programs; Jim Savard in charge of membership; Marilyn Luttrell in charge of the book shop.

The other highlight is always the presentation of the Pauline Meade Shier awards. Copeland Inc., received the business award for providing the new research library with parking, curbs and garden materials. Juli Chalupa received the student award for her research on the Nobby Top Shop. Her article ran in Mondays Make History.

The president's award went to John Cova, and Lee Ann Tardieu took home the merit award.

We'd like to thank three businesses that helped make our open house a success with their donations:

Bridgeview Winery
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Valley of the Rogue Dairy

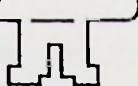


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History at the center

A time for reflection: Grants Pass and WWII

By Mike Oaks

As the society prepares for the Smithsonian exhibit of wartime posters, I was asked to look into what life was like during World War II in Josephine County.

The Second World War had no sooner erupted in the Pacific on December 7, 1941, than a call was sent out all over the Rogue Valley for carpenters, cement workers plumbers and so on to help construct the huge new army base named Camp White, just north of Medford — named in honor of Major General George Ared White, who died Nov. 23, 1941.

The former adjutant general for Oregon never knew that his name would be connected with this huge Southern Oregon Army installation.

The base was authorized January 1942 and the first concrete was poured on March 2.

Grants Pass became one of the weekend furlough cities for the men at Camp White. In talking with residents here who remember that period, I was told that many came on the train to attend church, and thus met local families who often showed their patriotism by inviting these young men over for Sunday dinner or even to stay for the weekend. The Palace Cafe, Busy Bee Cafe, Cave Shop restaurant and the local pubs were favorite haunts.

Dances at the fairgrounds pavilion and donuts and coffee at the American Legion hall were other pastimes. On Friday nights a concert was often held in the park.

While the Camp White men came

in, many Grants Pass residents left during the war. Eligible men went into the service and many women went to work in the shipyards of Portland and Bremerton, Wash. Irma Campbell was one of these women, for example. A few women found work in the woods as "whistle punks" and some worked grading lumber in sawmills.

Locals remember seeing pup tents in Riverside Park. Troops moving from base to base would stop in and camp overnight — a common occurrence in cities on a main highway.

Ration books were in use in Grants Pass, just like everywhere else. Gasoline, shoes, meat, butter and tires were among the most rationed items. Many people found that old car engines would burn on just about anything such as cleaning solvent or kerosene if you could get it. There was

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History...

no replacement for tires, though. For long trips, it was the train.

Victory gardens were popular in Grants Pass and the Daily Courier published many vegetarian recipes and "substitute" ideas for those cooking without the usual ingredients.

Residents might recall drills, when "Old Gerty" the air raid siren would howl from atop the Redwood Hotel and children had to duck and cover under their desks at school and those on the street took shelter.

Gerty also signalled black out, when everyone had to have drapes pulled and all lights extinguished. Block wardens patrolled to be sure no lights were visible to enemy bombardiers.

Fire lookouts were manned to search for these aircraft — especially after the bombing at Brookings. But none ever came.

That's not to say that the city escaped with only some inconvenience and a few careers put on hold. The war memorial near the gazebo in Riverside Park lists the names of those who gave their lives in the war.

From the collection

Neat as a pin

"From the collection" features interesting items in the care of the society. Some may be recent acquisitions or some may be long held by the society.

These are some of the many hat pins donated to the society from the estate of Elsie Street.



From about 1850 to 1930, most women wore hats and most women used hatpins to keep their hats where they belonged. Hatpins quickly became a fashion accessory in a VAST range of colors and styles. The height of the era was from 1900 to 1925. They often featured rhinestones, art deco and oriental designs.

Now hatpins and hatpin holders are collectibles. Lillian Baker is one of the American authorities on the subject, having written an encyclopedia and a value guide for them. One-of-a-kind designs can go for \$1,500 at auction, but most of those we acquired are appraised at \$10 to \$50.

*If your business contributed to the
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Help celebrate Women's History

March is Women's History Month. A number of local events are planned, including the annual art exhibit at the Wiseman Gallery at RCC. The society, though, will feature women's history in the Mondays Make History throughout the month.

Meanwhile, the book shop will be featuring a number of titles of interest to historians on the subject:

- "Hardship & Justice" featuring true tales of pioneer women, \$4.50
- "Soiled Doves" about prostitution in the early wild West, \$11.95
- "Naughty Ladies" another favorite on the subject of the oldest profession, \$9.95
- "Pioneer Homesteader" relates the lives of families and children during the homestead period and expansion west, \$9.50
- "Blossoms & Branches" a gathering of memories about the Rogue Valley's orchards, \$10.95
- "Gourmet Gifts from the Kitchen" a great cookbook, \$5.95
- "Patch Work Book" easy lessons for creative quilt design and construction, \$9.95
- "Something Different" the memoirs of a Lady Buckaroo, \$9.95
- "Golden Fire" the anniversary edition of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival including its founders, the Bowmers and its many actors and actresses, \$10
- "French Fashion Plates of the Romantic Era" 120 plates from "Petit Courier des Dames" that ran between 1830 and 1834. \$11.95
- "Children's Costume in the Nineteenth Century" by Elsie Street, \$2

Pictorial history collects the best shots, benefits society

The historical society is helping with a new book that is being published under the auspices of the Daily Courier, "A Pictorial History of Josephine County."

The 128-page hardcover history is one of a series that is being produced by an Oregon publisher with the backing of local newspapers. In our case, we're combining photographs from the society's collection, the Courier's archives and a few private collections. It's being put together in March by Michele Thomas, Edith Decker and Dennis Roler of the Courier, with a forward by the newspaper's owner, John Voorhies.

In the meantime, pre-orders for the book are being taken by the Courier, which will use these to determine how many books will be ordered. Enclosed you'll find a flyer with more information on ordering.

An extra bonus for the society is that \$1 of the sale of each book will be donated to the society for the use of our photographs. Plans are to order perhaps as many as 2,000 books, which could mean a large donation to the society if most of these are sold in the coming year.

The current schedule calls for the books to be delivered to the Courier in June for those who've pre-ordered to pick up. The book shop will likely be selling remaining books at a higher price for those who miss the pre-order or want to buy extras.

Recipe book is on its way

A volunteer, Sharon Norene, has helped Lee Ann Tardieu organize the "Josephine County Historical Society Recipe Book" into a pre-set format. Except for chapter dividers, the book is ready to send to the publisher.

The publishing company we've chosen is in the Midwest and creating these community cookbooks is about all they do, so the process should be smooth.

Recipes were put into the following chapters: appetizers and beverages, main dishes, vegetables, desserts (of which we had LOTS), soups and salads, breads and rolls and then miscellaneous.

About 200 recipes came in from members who had a favorite (or two) to share. The book's final price will depend on some final publishing decisions, but it'll be about \$8, according to Tardieu.

Have a great story idea?

After March, the Mondays Make History file is quite bare. If you have a story to tell that relates to local history, please take this opportunity to give yourself the oomph to finish it and submit it for publication.

If you have interesting World War II recollections that apply to local history, we're collecting them to run May 2 to June 14 when the Smithsonian poster exhibit is up.

Stories should be double-spaced, typed and between 1500 and 1700 words — 3 to 4 pages.

Mystery photo:

Robert Loar has sent this photo of his mom, Velma (Mrs. Russell) Loar, at the Hugo farm that belonged to his family. He's trying to track down exactly where it is and some background on the Loar family here. If you can help call him at 503-463-9866.



Reproductions of cool photos from our files are available from the research library.

When you've read it, give the Oldtimer to a friend

I would like to be a member

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Good stuff rubs off during benefit event

Marilyn Luttrell and Rose Scott applied to the Oregon Lottery and were selected to participate in this year's Holiday Scratch-it for Charity, in which representatives of charities scratch lottery tickets for all they're worth and keep the winnings for their organization.

In five minutes the pair made \$200 for the society.

Also on hand were Mel and Margie Shaw, Ray and Nancy Campbell and Debbs Potts, who presented the check to the society.

The event was Dec. 5 at the Rogue Valley Mall.

Kerbyville's curator sets up a whatzit window at Evergreen

A set of UFO's can be seen at the Evergreen Federal office downtown.

Don't call out the X-Files detectives, these are "unidentified found objects" courtesy of the Kerbyville Museum.

Ken Phillips, the museum curator, is trying to raise awareness of the museum and what it offers in town so we've offered him a spot on the Evergreen window line-up.

The idea for the UFO exhibit is from the book "Smithsonian Experience." The book noted that the most visited exhibit was up for two years in the National Museum of History and Technology. It featured two dozen objects that were no longer in common use and numbered so that they formed a quiz for the curious.

If you get a chance, swing by the window and see how well you can do in deciphering what some of these old-fangled tools and whatzits were used for in their day. You might even recall using some of them — or maybe watching your grandma or grandpa using them, anyway.

In memorium

The Josephine County Historical Society is grateful to the following patrons whose memorial gifts were received. These contributions benefit the society and are thoughtful and fitting tributes to those special friends and family members who are remembered and honored.

In memory of...

Ralph Asa West

a donation by Douglas McGregor



Helen McConnell

a donation by

the Redwood Lions Club

Tommy Thompson



JCHS depends on the generosity of its members.

Please help us advance your history by remembering JCHS in your will and estate planning or by making a contribution in memory of a fellow history lover.

THE OLDTIMER NEWSLETTER

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